

STATE SENATOR • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release



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Gov. Granholm Signs Legislation Broadening and Increasing Penalties on Methamphetamine Crimes

Schauer: 'The reality of meth addiction is frightening'

LANSING – State Sen. Mark Schauer (D-Calhoun, Jackson counties) today applauded Gov. Granholm efforts to crack down on the growing methamphetamine problem plaguing rural areas of the state. As a co-sponsor of the seven bill package signed today by the Governor, Schauer is confident that the necessary measures are now in place to help combat the sharp increase in the manufacturing and use of the illegal drug.

"Senator Schauer has been a tireless champion of stronger laws to address the spread of methamphetamine in our state, especially in Jackson County," said Governor Granholm. "I commend his efforts and I am proud to be signing these tougher drug laws today to give law enforcement new tools in the fight against this dangerous drug."

Sen. Schauer said, "The action taken by Gov. Granholm today is a solid step in combating the devastating effects of meth in our communities. I've spoken with law enforcement officials, community leaders, and area students about the drug and the reality of meth addiction is frightening. A few years ago two-thirds of all meth labs busted were in six counties in southwest Michigan, but the problem is spreading quickly. Jackson County is now second behind Allegan in the number of meth labs busted last year."

Last July Sen. Schauer joined Jackson County law enforcement officials and community leaders to host a methamphetamine community forum in Blackman Twp. More than 60 people attended the forum to learn about how they can help curb the spread of the drug in their community.

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The bill package:

- Increases penalties for owning, possessing, providing or using vehicles, buildings and equipment to make controlled substances to a maximum 10-year prison term and/or a \$100,000 fine;
- Increases penalties for manufacturing a substance that contains any quantity of methamphetamine by up to a maximum 20-year prison term and/or fine of up to \$25,000;
- Prohibits a person from illegally possessing more than 12 grams of ephedrine with a felony punishable by up to a two-year prison term and/or a maximum fine of \$2,000; and
- Prohibits transporting or possessing anhydrous ammonia in a container other than “a container approved by law” and levies a felony charge of up to a four-year prison term and/or a \$5,000 fine;
- Requires a state or local law enforcement agency to notify the Housing Law enforcement agency and the Dept. of Environmental Quality regarding the potential contamination of any property or dwelling that is or was the site of illegal drug manufacturing.

Meth has been compared with crack cocaine because of its highly addictive nature and low cost. It is considered by many to be America’s first major homegrown drug epidemic. A person can ingest meth by swallowing, inhaling, injecting, or smoking it, and the typical high is said to last at least 12 hours.

Meth use and production can lead to an increase in other types of crimes, as users are considered more likely to commit acts of violence and property offenses because they are high, or in order to satisfy their addiction.

Meth labs pose a severe environmental hazard. Products used in making the drug are highly flammable and toxic. According to estimates, production of one pound of meth generates between five to six pounds of toxic waste.

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Schauer is the Senate Democratic Floor Leader. He represents the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Calhoun County and most of Jackson County.